

**JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
TESTIMONY, JANUARY 17, 2013**

Chairman Hollingsworth and Members of the Committee:

I am Cheryl Hesser, Director of Rosebud County Library in Forsyth, which serves both Rosebud and Treasure Counties. I also have been very active in positions which include communication with libraries of all sizes in counties with varied economic and population situations. When I testify, I am including input from library directors in counties like McCone, Prairie, Petroleum, and Garfield, whose budgets barely cover utilities, some supplies, and limited new materials.

If I were a member of your committee, I would definitely be asking this question: What would increased State Aid funds be used for?

- First, I know that education is a priority for our Governor and this legislature. Libraries are the first resource for parents for Early Childhood Literacy, which has been linked strongly to school and professional success. Equipment and supplies for programs for babies and young children definitely can come from State Aid.
- Second, libraries are working on outreach for people of all ages with special needs. Such items as handicapped accessible computers and iPads with apps for special needs all the way from coordination challenges to poor eyesight to autism are items which can come from State Aid.
- Third, the need for public access computer areas for job searching, on-line accounts, and other essentials for adults is growing. Many small libraries are in heavy need of computer furniture, computers, peripherals, and other items which can come from State Aid.
- Fourth, furniture such as bookcases, tables, chairs, and children's furniture have long been items which State Aid can cover.
- Fifth, many librarians including myself are responding to the growing social and educational gathering needs of our patrons, something noted in recent Rosebud County long-range planning as in other counties. Special program and display items, all the way from crafts materials and cabinets to projectors, microphones, and large screen TV's can come from State Aid and can enhance the very important public outreach function of libraries.
- All of these items are not feasible in the county-, city-, or district-provided budgets of public libraries but can be made possible by an increase in per capita State Aid for Montana libraries.

Thank you for your consideration.